

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR US EG SO
SUBJ: SADAT ORAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON SOMALIA

REF: CAIRO 8238

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SADAT SENDS ORAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT
CARTER ASKING FOR USG MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO
PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE OF SOMALIA. END SUMMARY.

1. DROVE TO ALEXANDRIA THIS MORNING TO MEET WITH VP
HOSNI MUBARAK THERE. AS WE HAD SURMISED, HE HAD AN
ORAL MESSAGE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER FROM PRESIDENT SADAT.

2. SUBSTANCE OF SADAT'S MESSAGE, AS GIVEN TO ME SOMEWHAT
DISJOINTEDLY BY MUBARAK, IS SET FORTH BELOW:

(A) BEGIN MESSAGE: A FEW DAYS AGO SADAT HAD RECEIVED
A "MESSENGER" FROM SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE. MESSENGER
HAD ARRIVED VERY SECRETLY. SIAD HAD SENT HIM TO EXPLAIN
THE CURRENT SITUATION BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA AND TO
PROVIDE AN ACCOUNT OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA,
ESPECIALLY AFTER THE MENGISTU VISIT TO MOSCOW. SIAD'S
MESSAGE HAD INDICATED THAT SOVIET T-34 TANKS HAVE BEEN
DELIVERED TO ETHIOPIA. WHEN EGYPTIANS QUESTIONED THIS,

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MESSENGER HAD INSISTED SIAD HAS HARD INFORMATION TO THAT
EFFECT.

(B) ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE HAD SENT
AN INITIAL MESSAGE TO SADAT STATING THAT THE SOVIETS
WERE PRESSING HIM TO ARRIVE AT SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH
ETHIOPIA. SIAD HAD REFUSED. INSTEAD, SIAD HAD TAKEN

STEPS TO GUARD AGAINST SOVIET INSPIRED ETHIOPIAN PRESSURE.

(C) TO THIS END, SIAD IS PROVIDING HELP TO THE ERITREANS. (HERE MUBARAK INTERJECTED THAT GOE IS ALSO ASSISTING THE ERITREANS THROUGH THE SUDAN.) ADDITIONALLY, SIAD IS HEATING UP THE OGADEN BORDER AREA. SOMALI GUERRILLA UNITS HAVE BEEN SENT INTO THE AREA TO ATTACK ETHIOPIAN POSTS. SOME ETHIOPIAN POSTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN, ALTHOUGH SIAD HAS NOT PUBLICIZED THIS FACT. NOR HAVE THE ETHIOPIANS SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT. ACCORDING TO SIAD, THE NEXT THREE MONTHS-- APRIL THROUGH JUNE-- ARE LIKELY TO BE DECISIVE IN THE ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA CONTROVERSY.

(D) SIAD HAD ASKED FOR ARMS FROM PRESIDENT SADAT. GOE HAS SENT HIM A SHIPLOAD OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION. THE VESSEL HAS NOW BEEN AT SEA FOR FOUR DAYS SIAD HAD ALSO ASKED FOR LARGE QUANTITY OF MACHINE GUNS, WHICH EGYPT DOES NOT HAVE. GOE IS TRYING TO GET SOME MACHINE GUNS FOR SIAD FROM IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA TO ENABLE THE SOMALI PRESIDENT TO FIGHT THE ETHIOPIANS. BECAUSE OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS, SIAD CLAIMS, EPMG IS IN "BAD SHAPE." ALTHOUGH APPRECIATIVE OF EGYPTIAN ASSISTANCE, SIAD HAD SENT WORD TO SADAT THAT THE EGYPTIAN ARMS SENT ARE NOT SUFFICIENT. MORE ARMS ARE NEEDED IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS IF POSITIONS SEIZED BY THE SOMALIS IN OGADEN ARE NOT TO BE LOST. ON HIS UPCOMING TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA, SADAT INTENDS TO DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH KING KHALID AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD TO URGE THEM TO PROVIDE HELP TO SIAD.

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(E) SADAT ALSO RECALLED HIS TALK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ON SUBJECT OF SOVIET INROADS INTO AFRICA. IN SADAT'S VIEW, THIS IS VERY GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR USG TO ASSIST SOMALIS AS SAUDIS ARE ALREADY DOING WITH MONEY AND EGYPT IS DOING WITH ARMS. SADAT URGES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AGREE TO SEND SOME SMALL ARMS, LIKE MACHINE GUNS AND RIFLES, "NOT BIG THINGS." THEY COULD BE SENT EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, DEPENDING UPON USG WISHES. ADDITIONALLY, SADAT ASKS IF PRESIDENT CARTER MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEND SOME WHEAT (PERHAPS FIFTY OR SIXTY THOUSAND TONS) TO SOMALIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SUCH A GESTURE WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO THE SOMALIS AND WOULD ENCOURAGE SIAD TO RID HIMSELF OF SOVIET INFLUENCE. END MESSAGE.

3. I ASSURED MUBARAK THAT I WOULD CONVEY PRESIDENT SADAT'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER ASAP. I HAD TO TELL HIM IN ALL CANDOR, HOWEVER, THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE SANGUINE ABOUT ANY USG WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE WEAPONS

TO SOMALIA. SIAD BARRE HAD ALREADY ASKED FOR US MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE THROUGH HIS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS STILL FORMULATING ITS ARMS POLICY, HENCE THE PROVISION OF WEAPONRY WAS NOT VERY LIKELY. WE HAD NEVERTHELESS INDICATED THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER RESUMPTION OF SOME TYPE OF ECONOMIC AID AND WERE PREPARED TO SEND A SURVEY MISSION TO SOMALIA TO ASCERTAIN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC NEEDS. FOR THIS PURPOSE, OUR AMBASSADOR IN MOGADISCIO HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE ASAP AND TO DISCUSS THE MATTER PERSONALLY WITH HIM. TO OUR SURPRISE, THE SOMALI PRESIDENT HAS NOT THUS FAR RECEIVED OUT AMBASSADRDOR. WE KNOW NO REASON FOR THIS, BUT AS PRESIDENT SADAT WILL APPRECIATE, THIS FAILURE TO RECEIVE OUR AMBASSADOR MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO BEGIN MOVEMENT ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. WE REMAIN READY TO SEND A WURVEY MISSION TO EXAMINE SOMALIA'S ECONOMIC NEEDS, BUT
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ARE UNABLE TO MOVE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS OUR AMBASSADOR IS ABLE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH PRESIDENT SIAD.

4. MUBARAK EXPRESSED HIS SURPRISE AT THE SOMALI PRESIDENT'S REFUSAL TO RECEIVE THE US AMBASSADOR. HE INDICATED PRESIDENT SADAT WOULD BE PLEASED TO HEAR OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO USE THE SOMALI MESSENGER NOW HERE TO SEND WORD TO SIAD BARRE URGING HIM TO RECEIVE THE US AMBASSADOR ASAP. WE AGREED TO KEEP IN TOUCH ON THE MATTER.
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